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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

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TAGS: PREL KPAL ETRD EPET EUN LH

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA ON GAERC: CONCERNS ABOUT RUSSIA

REF: SECSTATE 51262

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Rebecca Dunham for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).).

¶1. (C) Summary. Lithuania's priority at the April 23-24 GAERC will be to suggest postponing the cooperation agreement with Russia until the GOR explains the Druzhba pipeline closure. The FM will also intervene to discuss his recent trip to Central Asia and to discuss the US-EU Summit declaration if it is not already agreed to. The GOL agrees with the USG position on many issues, including the importance of Belarus not getting a seat on the UNHRC. End Summary.

Russia

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¶2. (C) We delivered reftel points on April 19 to the Head of the MFA's Common Foreign and Security Policy Division, Tomas Gulbinas, who prepares the Minister's briefing book for the GAERC. He said the FM will intervene to propose postponing any action on the cooperation agreement with Russia until the GOR explains the Druzhba pipeline cutoff. He said the GOL has formally requested an explanation from the GOR and, despite a GOR promise to respond by March 15, has received nothing in reply but mixed messages via the media.

Central Asia

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¶3. (C) Gulbinas said that the FM will intervene to discuss his recent travels in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Gulbinas agreed that increased EU attention to Central Asia was a step in the right direction.

Support for a balanced US-EU summit declaration

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¶4. (C) Gulbinas said that if a US-EU Summit declaration is not agreed to by April 23, the FM will intervene and advocate for a balanced text focusing on "all the regions that raise concerns." The text should address Belarus, Russia's recent suppression of dissent, and visa free travel.

Belarus on UNHRC would be "terrible"

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¶5. (C) Gulbinas said that the EU's main goal with the UNHRC right now is to secure a seat for Slovenia. He was hopeful, however, that the EU will work on a strategy that will guarantee Slovenia's seat and, at the same time, prevent the undesirable result of Belarus gaining a seat.

US-EU Air Transport Agreement

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¶6. (C) The GOL feels that the US-EU Air Transport Agreement is proceeding at a normal pace, but Gulbinas was unsure if

the EU would be ready to sign at the April 30 Summit.

Other issues

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¶7. (C) Gulbinas said that Ukraine is off the GAERC agenda but that the USG position describes "the situation exactly as it is." He said the GOL shares the USG's concerns about the Western Balkans. He had nothing substantial to say about Israeli-Palestinian issues, but agreed that continued US-EU cooperation is important. The GOL continues to support a tough stance on Iran. He agreed with the USG position that there is reason to be hopeful about talks within the WTO. He said the GOL did not have much information on several issues -- Zimbabwe, Sudan, Algeria, and Lebanon -- and added that he often gets better information from the USG than from the EU in the week leading up to the GAERC.

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